

VZCZCXRO7962
RR RUEHGR
DE RUEHPO #0774 3401459
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 061459Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8967
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO 1094

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000774

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DEPT FOR WHA/CAR - LLUFTIG, WHA/PDA - EDETTTER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OEXC](#) [OPRC](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: U.S. SPONSORED MEDIA TRAINING GENERATES EXTENSIVE COVERAGE,
EXPANDS EMBASSY MEDIA CONTACTS

11. SUMMARY: The Embassy sponsored Broadcast Journalism Workshops in Suriname from October 12 - 21, 2006. The trainings, held in Suriname's two largest cities, generated extensive positive media coverage on TV and radio and in the newspapers. In addition, the media training laid the groundwork for a subsequent visit to Suriname's second largest city by EmbOffs, and in so doing deepened and expanded the range of Embassy contacts and access. END SUMMARY

12. During his second visit to Suriname, Professor Stephen C. Coon, International Communications Consultant and Emeritus Associate Professor of the Greenlee School of Journalism, Iowa State University, provided a total of 55 journalists in the capital, Paramaribo, and Nieuw Nickerie, Suriname's second largest city, basic skills training for radio and TV reporting. Journalists from 20 media outlets attended. Coon emphasized in particular the importance of free press in a democratic society.

13. Thirty-one local journalists participated in the training in Nieuw Nickerie. The three-day workshop included training on writing, reporting, editing, interviewing, ethics, use of sound and pictures, and identifying relevant stories. In Paramaribo, twenty-four journalists participated in a four-day workshop officially opened by Ambassador Lisa Bobbie Schreiber Hughes. At the end of both workshops participants received certificates of appreciation from the U.S. Embassy in Paramaribo.

14. Mr. Coon's presence in Suriname received extensive media coverage. A week before he arrived, his visit was announced in the daily newspaper Times of Suriname. The opening and closing of the Nickerie workshop appeared on all three local TV stations, and all three also broadcast separate interviews with Coon. The opening of the Paramaribo workshop was covered by two TV stations, ATV and RBN, all four daily newspapers, and Radio Apintie, and ATV broadcast an interview with Ambassador Schreiber Hughes. Photos from the closing ceremony of the workshop in the capital appeared in three newspapers. De Ware Tijd, the highest circulation paper in Suriname, carried a full page interview with Coon in its Saturday, October 21 edition.

15. The media training in Nickerie helped lay the groundwork for a follow-up visit by DCM and POL/PD Officer, who received broad media coverage. Local TV covered courtesy calls on officials and EmbOffs' tour of a rice mill and processing plant, carrying an 8-minute interview on the evening news. Twenty-five journalists and reporters attended a media roundtable, where copies of an IIP publication, "Journalist's Handbook," were distributed to the participants. Several interviews by the DCM and Pol/PD Officer provided opportunities to clarify U.S. policies on trade, investment, and support for stronger bilateral relations and cooperation, and were covered in national newspapers the following day. Journalists cited the high level of the delegation as a positive indication of the Embassy's interest in Nickerie.

16. COMMENT: The level of professionalism among journalists in

Suriname is low. Problems include frequent misquotes, inaccurate or contradictory reporting of facts, and poor sourcing of articles. Training is necessary to improve Embassy access as well as to improve standards. END COMMENT

Genton